

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system and method is disclosed for improved session management when roaming between access networks (AN) within a data cellular network. In one embodiment, gateway functionality is added to one AN in each subnet. The Gateway AN (GAN) provides session transfer capabilities during a dormant handoff with a source AN located in a different subnet. The GAN is responsible for receiving session information request messages from target AN's within the local subnet, querying other GANs within other subnets to locate the subnet that contains the source AN for the session and routing the session information back to the target ANs. In another embodiment, an extended session is established across several ANs within a subnet. When an Access Terminal (AT) initiates a new extended session, the responsible AN negotiates a common session across the ANs covered by the extended session area. During the session negotiation, each AN establishes a new session and allocates a new Unicast Access Terminal Identifier (UATI). Each AN is notified of each UATI allocated for the extended session. Once the negotiation between ANs is completed, the AT can roam anywhere within the extended session area without re-negotiating the session or transferring session information.